

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, November 18, 2016

Note from Commissioner Wagner

1. RIDE making progress toward development of [ESSA](#) transition plan

From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)

Instruction:

2. LEAs invited to join [Advanced Coursework](#) Network; deadline, **December 5**
3. 2017-18 [concurrent-enrollment](#) course options from CCRI, URI and RIC posted in RIDE website
4. *Reminder:* Student [registration](#) for Advanced Coursework Network for Spring 2017 is open until **January 9**

Educators:

5. *Reminder:* RIDE [certification](#) office to close for five days

Finance:

6. RIDE posts preliminary information on Fiscal Year 2018 [education aid](#)

Meetings:

7. 5th [ESSA community forum](#) to be held **Monday** (November 21) in South Kingstown

From the U.S. Department of Education

8. USED releases report on earnings for graduates of [career-training programs](#)

From other state and federal agencies

9. Health Department sponsors [Health Equity](#) Summit on **December 8**
10. National Endowment for the [Humanities](#) announces tuition-free summer programs for educators

From other organizations

11. [Ocean Exploration](#) Trust offers fellowships for educators, artists
12. *Reminder:* [Personal Finance](#) education conference scheduled for **December 10** at RIC
13. American Bar Association announces high-school [art contest](#)
14. Write Rhode Island high-school [short-story competition](#) accepting entries through **December 10**

Action Item Calendar

December 9 – [Textbook](#)-verification forms due

Note from Commissioner Wagner

1. RIDE making progress toward development of ESSA transition plan

We are proceeding with our work to develop a comprehensive plan to align our education system with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). We anticipate submitting our plan to the U.S. Department of Education on or by July 1.

To help us formulate the Rhode Island plan for transition to ESSA, we are holding monthly meetings with our Committee of Practitioners and we are holding Community Forums. We have held four Community Forums to date (in Providence, Lincoln, Coventry, and, last night, in Portsmouth), where attendance has ranged from 40 to upwards of 70 participants. We have one more scheduled forum, to take place on Monday, in South Kingstown. RIDE staff members, members of the Committee of Practitioners, and some representatives from the team who led the development of our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan are leading the conversations at these community forums.

Thanks to this process, we are gathering insightful input that is guiding us as we design the Rhode Island plan. As we move forward, we are

working to ensure that we build formal connections between our Strategic Plan and the ESSA transition plan.

Early conversations about our transition to ESSA confirm that we must build upon our implementation of academic standards: the Common Core State Standards (in literacy and mathematics) and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Regarding high-school assessments, our preliminary recommendation is that we employ a hybrid approach, using the SAT college-readiness test in grade 11 and the PARCC course-based tests in grade-9 (Algebra I and English 9). The use of college-readiness assessments such as the PSAT and SAT, available to students at no cost and during the school day, is an equity strategy that helps all students see college as an option and apply for college admission.

We are also developing a series of indicators that will be part of our accountability index and of the school, district, and state report cards, which could include reduced chronic absenteeism as a measure of student engagement, completion of challenging coursework, and other measures of school climate.

One point of agreement is that we need to include more than just test scores as we support continuous improvement of teaching and learning in our schools. We are eager to design and develop report cards that include a comprehensive set of information for educators, families, students, and the community.

From RIDE

Instruction:

2. LEAs invited to join Advanced Coursework Network; deadline, December 5

RIDE invites middle schools and high schools to apply to be a Network Provider for the Rhode Island Advanced Coursework Network. The Advanced Coursework Network is designed to help districts and schools create opportunities for Rhode Island students to envision, pursue, and complete their individualized graduation pathway by expanding on the great work of Rhode Island schools, districts, community organizations, and postsecondary-education institutions and by creating opportunities to further sustain existing efforts.

As a Network Provider, you will open doors and create new opportunities for Rhode Island middle- and high-school students by offering previously unavailable coursework to students across the state. Network Providers will offer coursework, including advanced science and mathematics courses, as well as Advanced Placement (AP[®]), world languages, and career-focused and dual- or concurrent-enrollment courses. As a Network Provider, you may choose to extend coursework already offered by your school or organization or to develop new course opportunities. Coursework may be face to face, blended, or virtual and could be offered during the traditional school day or after hours or on weekends. RIDE will pay a per-student tuition to Network Providers for each student they enroll from the network, based on the proposed tuition in each Network Provider's application process.

Applications are due via an online form by **December 5**. To review the Request for Proposals and additional resources for potential Network Providers, please visit:

WWW.RIDE.RI.GOV/ADVANCEDCOURSEWORK.

We hope that you will consider applying to offer coursework in the current school year. Information is also available on our website regarding becoming a Network Member, through which students at your school or district may choose to take courses offered by the network. Inquiries regarding the network can be directed to: Nicole Smith, at advancedcoursework@ride.ri.gov or 222-8436.

3. 2017-18 concurrent-enrollment course options from CCRI, URI and RIC posted in RIDE website

On Wednesday, the Board of Education voted to approve the list of concurrent-enrollment courses proposed by the Office of Post-Secondary Commissioner in conjunction with URI, RIC, and CCRI. To aid in your planning for the upcoming school year, the list of approved concurrent-enrollment courses is available at on the RIDE website: [17-18 Concurrent Course Catalog](#).

Concurrent courses are a type of dual-enrollment course that are the same courses as those taught at the college or university; these courses are approved to be taught at the high school, by a high-school teacher. The courses were reviewed at the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner in consultation with RIDE. The criteria for review included:

- transferability of the course among the public institutions of postsecondary education (as applicable), either as an equivalent course or as meeting a general-education requirement;
- applicability of the course to degree or certificate requirements;
- applicability of the course to a technical degree or industry-approved certification;
- confirmation that courses are in the college catalog and are regularly offered to students attending the college or university; and

- confirmation that the academic-catalog description communicates that the course is a rigorous, college-level course.

RIDE will schedule webinars for early next month to address some of the changes and considerations for the 2017-18 school year. Further information about these webinars and about dual and concurrent enrollment will be shared through the Field Memo and posted on www.ride.ri.gov/dualenrollment. The Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget is expected to include funding for continuing the Prepare RI initiative, which allows eligible students to participate in dual- and concurrent-enrollment programming with URI, RIC, and CCRI at no cost to students and families. Additional information regarding the Prepare RI funding will be shared as soon as it is available in the spring.

For questions about dual and concurrent enrollment, please email Nicole Smith, at Nicole.smith@ride.ri.gov.

4. *Reminder:* Student registration for Advanced Coursework Network for Spring 2017 is open until January 9

The Advanced Coursework Network is offering more than 60 additional courses in the spring of 2017, building on the successes of student registration in the fall and in yearlong courses that began this fall. Enrollment is open until **January 9**. Spring courses will begin in January and run throughout the spring semester. Course providers include Roger Williams University, Johnson & Wales University, Riverzedge, the Providence After School Alliance, Astro Curricular, the New England Institute of Technology, the New England Maritime Academy, and Salve Regina University. Courses include math, science, technology, arts, career exploration, ELA, and more.

Note: If courses have not met minimum enrollments by December 15 they may be cancelled to allow time for students in those courses to consider other options.

LEAs that have already confirmed their participation have received further information about enrollment procedures directly to their appointed contact. LEAs interested in joining the Advanced Coursework Network to enable students to access these options – at no cost to the student, family, or LEA – can visit www.ride.ri.gov/advancedcoursework for more information.

Questions about the Advanced Coursework Network can be directed to advancedcoursework@ride.ri.gov.

Finance:

5. RIDE posts preliminary information on Fiscal Year 2018 education aid

Preliminary Fiscal Year 2018 education-aid information has been posted at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/FundingSources/StateEducationAid.aspx>

RIDE has posted preliminary Fiscal Year 2018 education-aid figures to use for budget planning. These projections are for informational purposes only and include the RIDE-requested increases, which neither Governor Raimondo nor the General Assembly have approved at this time.

Final allocations may change during the course of the development of the state budget; we will revise our aid projections based on data updates.

Additional supporting detail for these calculations has also been posted at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/FundingSources/StateEducationAid.aspx#32231125-funding-formula-background-information>

Contact Kristen Cole, at 222-4681 or Kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov, if you have questions.

Educators:

6. *Reminder:* RIDE certification office to close for five days

The RIDE educator-certification office will be closed for 5 days to participate in a Lean event. On **Monday and Tuesday** (November 21 and 22) and on November 29 and 30 and December 1, all RIDE certification staff will participate in the Lean event. Lean is a process that focuses on the customer and uses a prescribed methodology to continuously improve and eliminate unnecessary steps or waste. The process originated in manufacturing but is used broadly today. The certification team is focused on developing solutions for streamlining the paper application process, especially during the summer months.

Meetings:

7. 5th ESSA community forum to be held Monday (November 21) in South Kingstown

The 5th community forum on the Rhode Island transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will take place on **Monday** (November 21), from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., at South Kingstown High School, 215 Columbia

St., Wakefield. Students, parents, teachers, community members, and community leaders across the state are invited to share experiences to help inform the ESSA implementation plan for Rhode Island.

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

8. USED releases report on earnings for graduates of career-training programs

As part of the Obama Administration's efforts to help students make more-informed decisions about where to enroll for postsecondary education and to protect students from career-training programs with poor outcomes, the USED released [earnings data](#) for career college programs. The data represent the mean and median earnings of graduates of career college programs, reported by the Social Security Administration under the [gainful employment regulations](#). Roughly 3,700 institutions nationwide offer career-training programs subject to the regulations.

The data show that graduates of career-training programs at public institutions generally fare better than those of comparable programs at for-profit colleges. [Highlights](#) include:

- overall, mean earnings of graduates from public undergraduate certificate programs are nearly \$9,000 higher than mean earnings of graduates of for-profit undergraduate certificate programs;
- graduates of certificate programs at public institutions are more likely to have attended programs that provide training for higher-earning fields – such as nursing – than graduates of certificate programs at for-profit colleges; and
- nearly a third (32 percent) of for-profit certificate students graduated from programs where the typical graduate earned less

than what a full-time minimum wage worker earns in a year (\$14,500), compared with only 14 percent in the public sector.

The data will be used to calculate debt-to-earnings rates that will determine whether a career college program is serving students well or leaving them with poor employment prospects and unaffordable debt. Consistently low-performing programs that fail to improve their quality will be barred from participating in federal student-aid programs. Starting in January, institutions must disclose to current and prospective students program earnings and other information, such as costs and graduation rates, as well as whether their programs are failing to meet the gainful employment standards.

From other state and federal agencies

9. Health Department sponsors Health Equity Summit on December 8

The Department of Health is a sponsor of the 2016 Health Equity Summit: “Health Equity in Action: Justice and Health for All.” The mission of the 2016 RI Health Equity Summit is to chart an actionable and realistic course towards equity for Rhode Island residents. Attendees will learn about how health equity can be achieved so that everyone has an equal opportunity to take advantage of resources that may help them live a long, healthy life. Attendees will participate in dynamic workshops, stimulating discussions, and leave with collaborative action steps to advance health equity.

The summit will take place on Thursday, **December 8**, from 8 a.m., to 4:30 p.m., at the Rhode Island Convention Center, 1 Sabin St., Providence. Registration is required. For more information, click [here](#).

10. National Endowment for the Humanities announces tuition-free summer programs for educators

The National Endowment for the Humanities funds [tuition-free summer programs](#) for school and college educators. Participants receive stipends to help cover travel and living expenses. Programs are held across the country. These one- to five-week study opportunities focus on important topics, texts, and questions in the humanities; enhance the intellectual vitality and professional development of participants; build a community of inquiry and provide strong models of scholarship and teaching; and promote connections between teaching and research in the humanities. The deadline for applications is **March 1**.

From other organizations

11. Ocean Exploration Trust offers fellowships for educators, artists

The Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) is accepting applications for students and educators to participate in the 2017 [E/V Nautilus Expedition](#). Founded by Dr. Robert Ballard in 2008, OET is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to bringing ocean exploration to the world via live telepresence and providing experiential opportunities for students, educators, and early-career professionals.

Opportunities for formal classroom educators, informal educators, and artists are available through OET's [Science Communication Fellowship](#). Accepted Fellows attend a science-communication training workshop in March 2017 and sail aboard E/V *Nautilus* for 2-4 weeks to bring the excitement of ocean exploration to students and public audiences around the world through varied outreach platforms. For program specifics and detailed application packets, visit: www.oet.org

[Science Communication Fellowship](#) application deadline: **January 13**.

Contact the OET Education Team with your questions via education@oet.org.

12. *Reminder: Personal Finance education conference*
scheduled for December 10 at RIC

The annual [Free Financial Capability Conference](#), coordinated by [RI Jump\\$tart](#), will be held on Saturday, **December 10**, at Rhode Island College, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Register through this link:

<https://goo.gl/Q5sb8o>

If you have taken a Personal Finance related course or would like to share your perspective about the state of personal-finance education in Rhode Island, then sign up to be part of a student panel at the Saturday, December 10, Financial Capability Conference at Rhode Island College. Participation is limited.

Students sign up for the panel, at:

<https://goo.gl/forms/QV24dG40yxBzGg962>

The panel will run from 2 - 2:45 p.m.; however, you are encouraged to join us for all or part of the day, including lunch, which will be a time for you meet the panel moderators and network with industry leaders and elected officials.

Questions? Students are encouraged to email Isabella (Catherine) Gentil, at cgentil458@student.egsd.net.

Adult educators with questions may email Dr. Margaret Brooks, at rhodeislandjumpstart@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you on December 10, as we continue to build financial capability and capacity in the Rhode Island education space.

13. American Bar Association announces high-school art contest

Each year, the American Bar Association (ABA) hosts an art contest for students in grades 9 through 12 (or the equivalent) in the United States. Students may compete as individuals or in groups. The ABA is accepting submissions of artwork for the 2017 Law Day Art Contest from December 2, 2016, through March 31, 2017. The theme for Law Day 2017 is "The 14th Amendment: Transforming American Democracy."

Information about the contest is available [here](#).

14. Write Rhode Island high-school short-story competition accepting entries through December 10

The Write Rhode Island submission button has been launched. Students across Rhode Island in grades 8-12 can now upload their short story for the Write Rhode Island short-story competition.

School One and Goat Hill have come together to present Write Rhode Island; Write Rhode Island is a creative-writing competition for students, which will showcase the talented young writers in our state.

Winners of Write Rhode Island will receive prizes, awards, and publication in a print anthology. This anthology will be published in March, and there will be several book launches, readings, and celebrations.

The deadline to submit a piece is Saturday, **December 10**. Full competition guidelines and the submit button can be found at www.school-one.org.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>